

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, IS

SUBJECT: DINITZ PRESENTS GOI ASSESSMENT MILITARY SITUATION

1. SUMMARY: IN COURSE OF OCT 1 MEETING WITH ASST SEC SISCO, ISRAELI AMB DINITZ PRESENTED CURRENT GOI ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY SITUATION IN ADDITION TO POLITICAL TOUR D'HORIZON (STATE 196714). DINITZ SAID THAT WHILE IN ISRAEL ON CONSULTATIONS HE FOUND GROWING CONCERN WITH NEW EQUIPMENT ENTERING ARAB INVENTORIES FROM SOVIET UNION AND WEST. DINITZ STRESSED THAT ARABS HAVE THEORETICAL CAPABILITY TO ATTACK ALL ISRAELI POPULATION CENTERS EITHER WITH AIRCRAFT OR WITH MISSILES, INCLUDING SOVIET SUPPLIED SCUD. DINITZ ARGUED THAT US AND ISRAEL SHOULD EXAMINE MOTIVATION FOR SOVIET UPGRADING OF ARAB CAPABILITIES AND SEE WHAT THIS MEANS FOR SPIRIT OF DETENTE. HE ADDED THAT ISRAEL MUST ALSO CONSIDER HOW ESCALATION AFFECTS ISRAELI ARMS REQUIREMENTS AND RECALLED THAT ISRAELI REQUESTS FOR US "SMART" BOMBS AND NUMBER OF OTHER ITEMS WERE STILL OUTSTANDING. SISCO THANKED DINITZ FOR PRESENTATION AND WITHHELD COMMENT PENDING STUDY OF POINTS RAISED.

THAT WHILE HE WAS IN ISRAEL HE HAD FOUND GREATER CONCERN
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ABOUT MILITARY SITUATION THAN HE HAD ANTICIPATED. ISRAEL SEES ESCALATION IN BOTH NUMBERS AND TYPES OF WEAPONS ARAB STATES NOW RECEIVING. SOVIET UNION NO LONGER HAS MONOPOLY SINCE WESTERN ARMS NOW FLOWING IN. DINITZ FELT THIS MAKES

WEIRD COMBINATION; SOVIETS FINDING IT NECESSARY TO ESCALATE THEIR ARMS SHIPMENTS TO MAINTAIN COMMITMENT OF THEIR ARAB CLIENTS IN FACE UNLIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF SOME ARAB COUNTRIES AND UNLIMITED WILLINGNESS OF WESTERN COUNTRY LIKE FRANCE TO SELL ARMS. THUS, ARAB INVENTORIES CONTAIN SUKOIS, TUPULOVS, MIGS AND MIRAGES AND BOAST SAM TWOS, SIXES AND IN SYRIA AND EGYPT, FROG MISSILES. FROG IS MORE DANGEROUS IN SYRIA THAN IN EGYPT, SINCE RANGE DOES NOT CARRY EGYPTIAN FROGS OUT OF SINAI, BUT SYRIAN FROGS CAN REACH SUBURBS OF HAIFA. DINITZ SAID ISRAEL BELIEVES EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS MAY NOW HAVE MORE SOPHISTICATED MISSILE IN SOVIET SCUD.

3. DINITZ SAID NEW ARAB EQUIPMENT TRANSFORMED MILITARY PICTURE BY GIVING ARABS STRATEGIC ATTACK CAPABILITY. ARABS NOW HAVE AT LEAST THEORETICAL CAPABILITY FOR LOW-LEVEL PENETRATION RAIDS. WITH SUKOI 20 AND NEW CONFIGURATION OF MIRAGE 5, ARABS CAN FLY UNDER ISRAELI RADAR NET AND REACH POPULATION CENTERS. WITH THESE PLANES PLUS MISSILES LIKE FROG 7 AND SCUD, ARABS HAVE CAPABILITY TO HIT PRACTICALLY EVERY POPULATION CENTER IN ISRAEL.

4. DINITZ SAID ISRAEL HAD TO REGARD THIS AS VERY GRAVE DEVELOPMENT WHICH RAISED TWO PROBLEMS. FIRST IS HOW SOVIET SUPPLIES FIT INTO ENTIRE PICTURE OF DETENTE AND WHAT SOVIET INTEREST IS IN UPGRADING CAPABILITIES OF EQUIPMENT BEING PROVIDED TO ARABS. QUESTION IS WHETHER SOVIETS ARE SIMPLY REACTING TO ESCALATION OF WEAPONS BEING PROVIDED TO ARABS BY WEST OR IF IT REPRESENTS POLICY OF DEEPER SOVIET PENETRATION IN PERSIAN GULF. ISRAEL WONDERS HOW THIS FITS IN WITH SPIRIT OF DETENTE IN WORLD AND FEELS THIS POSSIBLY AREA FOR JOINT US-ISRAELI EVALUATION.

5. DINITZ SAID SECOND PROBLEM WAS HOW ISRAEL SHOULD REARM ITSELF TO MEET THIS CHANGE IN BALANCE. NEW EQUIP-
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MENT DOES NOT REPRESENT UPSET IN BALANCE BUT DOES REPRESENT CHANGE, AND THIS IS TREND WHICH MUST BE WATCHED CLOSELY. THIS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF SCUD MISSILE WHICH IS INTRODUCTION OF COMPARATIVELY NEW ELEMENT IN BALANCE.

6. DINITZ SAID HE DID NOT WANT GO INTO FORMAL PRESENTATION OF WHAT THIS ALL MEANS IN TERMS ISRAELI EQUIPMENT NEEDS. FORTUNATELY, DIFFICULT HURDLE OF AGREEMENT ON PLANES IS NOW BEHIND US AND ISRAEL. BUT THERE ARE STILL MANY REQUESTS PENDING. DINITZ DID NOT WANT GO INTO DETAILS EQUIPMENT OUTSTANDING BUT NOTED IT INCLUDED NUMBER TYPES OF BOMBS WHICH HAD HIGH DEGREE OF ACCURACY

IN HITTING TARGET. HE ADDED SOME REQUESTS HAVE BEEN PENDING FOR OVER YEAR. DINITZ REITERATED HIS STATEMENT THIS WAS NOT FORMAL PRESENTATION ON THESE OUTSTANDING ITEMS BUT HAD TO BE MENTIONED SINCE ANALYSIS WOULD NOT BE COMPLETE WITHOUT THIS INFORMATION.

7. DINITZ ADDED ISRAELI ANALYSTS NOW CONVINCED SAUDI ARABIA HAS SEALED AGREEMENT WITH FRANCE FOR MIRAGE AIRCRAFT. SISCO SAID US HAD HEARD DEAL WAS FOR 38 OR 39 AIRCRAFT BUT US CANNOT SAY DEAL IS FIRM. US ASKED SAUDIS FOR EXPLANATION AND DID NOT RECEIVE SATISFACTORY REPLY. SISCO ADDED THAT IF ISRAEL HAS FIRM INFORMATION ON THIS IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO PASS IT ON TO US. THOUGH US MAY HAVE NO DOUBTS AS TO ACCURACY OF RUMORS, THERE IS NO WAY TO PROVE ALLEGATION. DINITZ PROMISED TO PASS ON ANY INFO HE COULD GET AND SAID THIS CONCLUDED HIS PRESENTATION.

8. SISCO THANKED DINITZ FOR PRESENTATION AND SAID US WOULD STUDY POINTS DINITZ RAISED BEFORE ATTEMPTING COMMENT.

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